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## Viewing cable 07TELAVIV2280, APHSCT TOWNSEND TAKES STOCK OF BMENA REGION WITH

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">07TELAVIV2280</a>	<a href="#">2007-07-26 13:52</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Tel Aviv</a>

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 002280

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WHITE HOUSE FOR APHSCT TOWNSEND.

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/13/2017

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SUBJECT: APHSCT TOWNSEND TAKES STOCK OF BMENA REGION WITH  
MOSSAD DIRECTOR DAGAN

Classified By: Charge d'affaires Gene A. Cretz for reasons 1.4 (B/D).

11. (S) SUMMARY: Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (AFHSC), met Mossad Director Meir Dagan on July 12 for a general discussion of regional security threats. On the Iranian nuclear program, Dagan proved surprisingly optimistic about the effects of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and their impact on Iranian elites. On most other fronts, however, Dagan expressed deep skepticism regarding any near-term solutions. Dagan believes that the Syrians were emboldened by the Second Lebanon War, and argued for a concerted international effort to enforce UNSC resolutions in Lebanon as a means of removing Syria from Iranian influence. In Dagan's personal opinion, present attempts to prop up the government of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad will fail, and "an entirely new approach" with the Palestinians is required. Dagan and Townsend surveyed political developments in North Africa, Turkey, and the Gulf, and shared concerns about Pakistan's ability to withstand the challenge of Islamic radicals. END SUMMARY.

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Financial Sanctions Offer Hope on Iran  
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12. (S) Mossad Director Meir Dagan began his two-hour meeting with Townsend by expressing satisfaction with sanctions against Iran. Dagan said UNSC Resolutions 1737 and 1747 caught the Iranians off-guard, and were having an impact on the Iranian elite and financial community. The resolutions had been particularly successful through their indirect consequences, explained Dagan, by stigmatizing Iranian businesses and discouraging risk-averse Europeans from being connected with Iran. Dagan praised ongoing GOI-USG cooperation on this front, and added that domestic economic problems were creating additional pressure on the regime.

13. (S) With regard to their nuclear program, Dagan said the Iranians are attempting to convey a "false presentation" that they have mastered the uranium enrichment process. The reality is that they are not there yet, said Dagan, and they are paying a heavy political price (sanctions) for something they have yet to achieve. Dagan noted growing antipathy in Russia towards Iran and its nuclear program, and said the Iranians were shocked by Russian statements accusing them of supporting terrorism against the United States. In Dagan's view, there is no ideological conflict within the Iranian leadership (all wish to see the destruction of Israel), but there is a growing divide on tactics with some supporting a retaliatory position against the West and others favoring new policies of moderation. Recognizing the growing strength of the moderate camp, Dagan said that the militant followers of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are now trying to target supporters of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as spies.

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Gulf States Await Action (From Others) on Iran  
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14. (S) According to Dagan, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf States all fear Iran, but want someone else "to do the job for them." Townsend and Dagan discussed the current state of affairs in the Saudi royal court, where the Mossad Chief accused Foreign Minister Saud bin Faysal of playing a "very negative role." He also pointed to the recent visit of the Saudi King Abdullah to Jordan as a historical first and turning point for relations between the two countries. Townsend agreed, and said that the Saudi king has a sense of urgency on the political front. Dagan characterized Qatar as "a real problem," and accused Sheikh Hamid of "annoying

everyone." In his view, Qatar is trying to play all sides -- Syria, Iran, Hamas -- in an effort to achieve security and some degree of independence. "I think you should remove your bases from there...seriously," said Dagan. "They have confidence only because of the U.S. presence." Dagan predicted, with some humor, that al-Jazeera would be the next cause of war in the Middle East as some Arab leaders (specifically Saudi Arabia) are willing to take drastic steps to shut down the channel, and hold Sheikh Hamid personally responsible for its provocations.

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Syria Taking Dangerous Risks  
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¶5. (S) Dagan echoed other reports that Syria expects an Israeli attack this summer, and has raised its level of readiness. Despite the fact that Israel has no intention of attacking, said Dagan, the Syrians are likely to retaliate over even the smallest incident, which could lead to quick escalation. Dagan believes that Syria's strategic alliance with Iran and Hizballah has not changed, and that Assad views these policies as both "successful and just." There is a tendency to assume that Syria can be separated from Iran, said Dagan, and that this offers the key to weakening Hizballah. Dagan argued that the opposite is true: by enforcing UN resolutions on Lebanon and increasing efforts to disarm Hizballah, the international community can remove the glue that binds Iran and Syria. Enforcing the resolutions would put additional pressure on Assad, who fears being tried for the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri above all else. The advantage of such an approach, continued Dagan, is that the legal ground is already in place for action by the UNSC. This credible threat could sufficiently frighten Syria away from Iran and towards more natural allies in the Arab League.

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Deep Pessimism on Relations With Palestinians  
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¶6. (S) Departing from official GOI policy, Dagan expressed his personal opinion that after more than a decade of trying to reach a final status agreement with the Palestinians, "nothing will be achieved." Only Israeli military operations against Hamas in the West Bank prevent them from expanding control beyond Gaza, lamented Dagan, without which Fatah would fall within one month and Abbas would join his "mysteriously wealthy" son in Qatar. Offering what he believed to be a conservative estimate, Dagan said that USD 6 billion had been invested in the Palestinian Authority since ¶1994. "What did it accomplish, other than adding a few more people to the Fortune 500?" asked Dagan. Although he expressed his personal faith in Salam Fayyad, Dagan said that the Palestinian Prime Minister had no power base. Fatah as a party would have to completely reorganize itself in order to regain credibility, argued Dagan, but instead they have turned once again to the "old guard." The Mossad Chief suggested that a completely new approach was required, but did not provide Townsend any additional details.

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Pakistan...and Other Regional Concerns  
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¶7. (S) Townsend and Dagan then embarked on an informal tour of the region, comparing notes on countries critical to combating terrorism. Dagan characterized a Pakistan ruled by radical Islamists with a nuclear arsenal at their disposal as his biggest nightmare. Al-Qaeda and other "Global Jihad" groups could not be relied upon to behave rationally once in possession of nuclear weapons, said Dagan, as they do not care about the well being of states or their image in the media. "We have to keep (President Pervez) Musharaf in

power," said Dagan. In North Africa, Dagan contended that Qaddafi needs to be pushed more in order to put Libya on the right track. Qaddafi faces little domestic pressure, said Dagan, but has traditionally responded to outside threats and runs foreign policy based on his emotions. The only reason Qaddafi moderated his position to begin with, said Dagan, was that he feared that he was "in the crosshairs" for regime change. Dagan viewed the situation in Algeria as more serious, with the south of the country becoming increasingly dangerous and the leadership uncertain as it faces radical Islamic forces. Morocco is coping better with these issues "in spite of the king," said Dagan, who appears to take little interest in governing. In Turkey, Dagan said that Islamists there are not of the same cloth as others in the region, but he does fear that they are slowly breaking down the secular character of the state and could become more radical over time. Dagan argued that if the Turkish military received more direct support from the United States, it would be better able to prevent the rise of Islamists.

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